

Singer

Comments on latest draft of Asilomar Reports.

1. In the introductory "Report" which written by Berg, the following comments.

Page 2, line 5 from bottom:

Should include the notion that those attending the conference were in fact told that there would be no distribution or copying of the tapes. Otherwise it seems to be left to the discretion of the Academy to act on our recommendation when in fact, we really have to insist on the restriction.

Page 4: In order accurately to reflect the procedure on Thursday morning, I believe the "Report" should state clearly that a vote by hands was taken on each section of the Provisional Report, with one exception, and further that the votes were all overwhelming in the sense that there were no votes in which more than 10 percent (or whatever) of those voting voted in the negative. This should be qualified to indicate that in some instances, the vote was taken with the clear understanding that the section would be revised in accordance with specific recommendations for changes.

Page 5: I believe it would be useful to include a brief report of Bayev's remarks and his indication of support and cooperation.

2. SUMMARY STATEMENT (APPENDIX I)

Section I.

Page 1, second paragraph, first sentence.

In reference to "should end: and, if so, whether there are ways.... etc." I don't like the rewording of this. The meaning is quite different from the sentence in the Provisional Report. The original is more accurate in that it reflects the fact that essentially everyone came to Asilomar assuming that we would indeed be in a different position than that defined in the Berg letter by the end of Asilomar. Further, the wording says that the decision to end the pause might have been made separately from the minimization of risks while in fact these two notions were very much interwoven. In case I haven't made this clear, note that the way it is currently written suggests that the pause might have ended without ways to minimize the risks.

Section II.

Page 3. The word "similarly", (line 8 from bottom) is gratuitous, since the point being made is not similar in principle, or logic to the previous sentence. Strike the word.

Page 4. At end of line 8, insert "1)", to go with "2)" two lines down. On line 3 from bottom, word should be substantial and not substantiated, or documented rather than substantiated (or both). Thus: "--and substantial and documented"

Section III.

See comments on copies of pages 6, 8, 9, and 10 where not specifically indicated its OK with me.

In general I found it odd to realize that as it is now constructed, there are no experiments in category 4 (High Risk) containment except for a poorly defined group under prokaryotes. We should realize that essentially we are saying that experiments classified as High Risk are not to be done. It's fine, but I wanted to point this out. For myself, I think I might put experiments with total primate DNA and prokaryote vectors into such a class.

3. APPENDIX J

Why have you substituted the idea of a safety "officer" or "office" for the original notion of a committee? I wouldn't object to including both ideas, i.e., saying either a committee or a safety office or officer. I don't think we should have only the officer. It can more readily be viewed as "police" as opposed to a peer group and might, therefore, be less acceptable to many.

4. Alexander Goldfarb has received a visa to emigrate, according to NY Times.
5. Implementation (Section IV, Brenner). See comments on copies of Pages 11, 12, 13.